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A catalogue of the sport safety resources for community Australian Football clubs from the websites of key sport safety agencies

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Introduction: Community Australian Football (AF) clubs have a responsibility to protect their players with a safe environment. Community AF clubs currently have access to, and use, numerous types of sport safety resources addressing various sport safety issues, obtained from a number of sources. This study describes a catalogue of the AF-relevant sport safety resources, available from the websites of key agencies in Australia which develop and disseminate such documents, so as to identify the gaps and duplications in the available resources.

Methods: Document analysis as a qualitative research method, using sport safety resources obtained from the websites of seven key agencies involved in the National Guidance for Australian Football Partnerships and Safety (NoGAPS) project, was undertaken. These agencies include a peak sports body, an insurance company, as well as government and non-government agencies which develop and disseminate sport safety resources for community AF clubs.

Results: A catalogue of the AF-relevant sport safety resources developed by and disseminated on the websites of seven key sport safety agencies in Australia was developed. A total of 216 (187 after removal of duplicates) sport safety resources for community sports clubs were identified between May and September 2013. The types of resources catalogued were: research reports (n = 40), factsheets and brochures (n = 39), guidelines (n = 26), checklists and tools (n = 25), policies (n = 22), position statements (n = 6), rules and regulations (n = 6), posters (n = 6), codes of conduct/behaviour (n = 5), online resources (n = 4), and other (n = 5). Themes around sport safety issues were also identified through the cataloguing process, and these include types of sport safety issues (such as concussion and heat) as well as target groups (such as women and children). The cataloguing process revealed a duplication of resources for single issues both within and across agencies.

Conclusion: Sport safety resources are currently developed and disseminated in the form of different types of resources that cover single issues. This creates duplication of resources covering the same sport safety issue. The role of key sport safety stakeholder agencies in developing and disseminating sport safety resources is to effectively engage the end-user in sport safety interventions. Key sport safety agencies need to collaborate to develop a comprehensive sport safety resource that covers multiple issues and multiple solutions, which can easily be disseminated online, and effectively implemented and adopted by community AF clubs.